

THE
**FUTURE
OF
AMERICA'S
NATIONAL
PARKS**

First Annual
Centennial Strategy for

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



Site: CHAT

Year: 2007

Vision Statement

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area will raise the profile of the National Park Service as the leading conservation agency in the Atlanta metropolitan area. As the steward of a 48-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee River and over 6,000 acres of land along the river corridor, the park not only protects the primary source of drinking water for metro Atlanta but also provides a critical refuge for the area's natural and cultural resources, which are being rapidly displaced by unprecedented urban growth. Even as Atlanta continues to expand, the park will expand its leadership role in preserving green space and protecting the Chattahoochee watershed while providing enhanced recreational and educational opportunities to a large and diverse urban population.

In anticipation of the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service, the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area will work with a wide range of county, city, non-profit and private partners to fully develop the Chattahoochee Greenway, a planned network of integrated trails that will span the entire 48-mile river corridor. The park will also acquire additional parcels of land within its recently expanded boundary to preserve critical green space and make unique cultural resources, including historic Hyde Farm, available for public education programs. Most importantly, the park will tap into a growing network of partners, volunteers and civic associations to increase public awareness of the Chattahoochee River's importance to the metro area's history, ecology and future sustainability.

Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager

Chuck Barat

Site: CHAT

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Chattahoochee River NRA plans to partner with the Trust for Public Land to purchase historic Hyde Farm and preserve an important piece of local history as well as critical green space. Because the farm was operational until three years ago, the complex remains well-preserved and would be a major visitor attraction as a living history site. Aquisition of the farm would reinforce the leadership role the NPS has assumed for environmental stewardship within the metro Atlanta area. It would also secure a new venue for recreational and educational opportunities that could be developed in partnership with local government and non-profit groups, including Cobb County and the Friends of Hyde Farm. Both the county and friends group have intiatiated fundraising activities to support operation and maintenance of the farm as a visitor attraction.

☐ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

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STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Encourage children to be future conservationists.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Chattahoochee River NRA will partner with the Chattahoochee Nature Center, a non-profit conservation and education foundation, to construct and operate a Discovery Center for hosting educational programs and events. The Discovery Center will provide a state-of-the-art venue for park and Nature Center staff to present programs on the area's natural history. The Center offer expanded opportunities for hands-on learning and teaching and will strengthen the current partnership between the park and Nature Center. The Nature Center is currently raising funds for the new facility and hopes to complete fundraising by FY 2009.

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ENVIRONMENT

☒ Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area will engage existing partners, such as the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and Trout Unlimited, as well as emergent partners, including the new city of Sandy Spring, to develop community-based volunteer programs focused on water quality monitoring, trail maintenance, and river cleanliness. With the growth of the regional population, communities and park visitors are eager to work with the NPS to ensure the Chattahoochee remains a viable source of drinking water and an enjoyable recreational resource.

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RECREATION

☒ Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

☒ Rehabilitate over 2,000 miles of trails within or connected to national parks, including trails accessible to those with disabilities.

Chattahoochee River NRA and numerous public and private partners, including Forsyth, Gwinnett, Fulton and Cobb counties and the cities of Duluth, Sandy Spring, Roswell and Atlanta, will achieve a standard of excellence in cooperative urban park planning and development through the completion of the Chattahoochee Greenway, an integrated trail system that will extend 48 miles along the Chattahoochee River. The trail system will provide recreation and alternative transportation opportunities to the region's growing population. By incorporating standardized trail design with localized financing and maintenance responsibilities, the Greenway will foster a sense of shared stewardship and appreciation for the Chattahoochee corridor. For many of the partner organizations, the river corridor presents the best remaining opportunity to preserve important greenspace and provide residents with a refuge from urban life. Coordinated planning and budgeting for the project is on-going, with some sections already complete.

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RECREATION

☒ Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

☒ Increase the number of visitors that attend ranger-facilitated programs such as campfire talks, hikes, and school programs.

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area will increase the number of contacts through facilitated programs through a partnership with the Chattahoochee Nature Center, which is planning construction of a new Discovery Center. The Center will provide an attractive, state-of-the-art venue for educational programs involving NPS staff and volunteers. In addition, the park plans to open a shared visitor center with the new city of Sandy Spring, which will attract new visitors to the park programs

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Site: CHAT

EDUCATION

☒ Promote life-long learning to connect generations through park experiences.

☒ Enroll an additional two million children in the Junior Ranger program.

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area will utilize an innovative partnership with the city of Sandy Spring to make Junior Ranger booklets available through the city's current visitor information center. This effort will be expanded when the park and Sandy Spring open a joint visitor center.

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PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Model what it means to work in partnership.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area will tap into a growing network of partners and volunteers to position the National Park Service as a leading advocate for conservation in the metro Atlanta area. First and foremost, completion of the Chattahoochee Greenway will require a coordinated effort among multiple city, county, non-profit private groups. With the National Park Service as the leader of the effort to coordinate completion of the trail, all parties will benefit from the interconnectivity. In addition, the park will support the effort of its primary educational partner, the Chattahoochee Nature Center, to construct and operate the new Discovery Center educational facility. Finally, the park will partner with the Trust for Public Land, Cobb County and the Friends of Hyde Farm to accomplish an ambitious plan to purchase the farm and maintain it as a living history site. None of the groups involved in the effort can accomplish this goal without the assistance of others, but a strong partnership effort will bring great rewards to the public.

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